



School Reassignment Policy

To: Joel D. Boyd, Ed.D. Superintendent

From: Latifah Phillips, Chief Equity and Engagement Officer

Date: March 12, 2021

Re: Recommendation for Reassignment Policy of Currently Enrolled Students Placed Through the Temporary School Assignment Policy

Attached please find the recommended School Reassignment Policy which delineates the process for returning current students back to their original assignments that were made using the guidelines of the 2020-21 school assignment policy which was adopted in January 2020 and enacted until the passage of the temporary policy in July 2020. This policy was drafted namely with kindergarten students in mind; however, it also acknowledges other students who may have been placed under the guidelines of the temporary policy.

This policy prioritizes the reassignment of students through the 2020 spring early registration process, the reassignment of students impacted by the return of lottery students to their original school placement, the assignment of McKinney-Vento students during the 2020-21 school year, the reassignment of kindergarten students who were placed out of zone due to lack of available kindergarten seats at a school within their zone of residence, and the re-registration of students who unenrolled from the district due to reasons relating to the pandemic.

The priorities and options for the 2021-22 School Assignment Policy - for new students to the District in the upcoming year – are continuing to be analyzed and will be proposed under a separate document.

School Reassignment Policy 2021-22

I. Overview

- a. For the 2020-21 school year, due to COVID-19 related safety-requirements, Lowell Public Schools adopted a temporary policy and policy addendum for assigning students, which namely impacted kindergarten student placement. Some students newly enrolled in the District also received placements based on the placement rules of the temporary policy.

i. Kindergarten

Families who pre-registered their child for kindergarten between May 26 - June 30, 2020 (noon) were entered into the kindergarten lottery. Families who secured a seat through the lottery are eligible to attend that school in the **2021-22** school year.

ii. Kindergarten: School Assignment 2020-21 due to COVID-19 Safety Requirements

Due to COVID-19 safety and health requirements, there was limited in-person enrollment. During the 2020-21 school year, the temporary policy designated kindergarten students to be assigned to the school closest in distance to their home for the following reasons: equitable access to options, transportation limitations and safety. This was to help ensure that families have the same access to options and avoid remote learning becoming the default option for families who do not have or cannot afford their own means of transportation.

iii. Waitlist

Students who were placed on the waitlist during the 2019-20 school year will remain on the waitlist until the following school year (2021-22).

II. Students New to the District

- a. Students who moved into the District after the start of the school year were immediately enrolled into remote learning and given the opportunity to select in-person instruction using the process delineated for students already enrolled in the District.
- b. Some students who were new to the district were initially placed remotely in a school outside of their zone. These out of zone remote seats for students new to the District were one year only placements.

III. Reassignment of Students Who Attended During the 2020-21 School Year

Every effort will be taken to ensure that kindergarten students who wish to remain in their 2020-21 school placement for the 2021-22 school year have the opportunity to do so. In the event all students are not able to be accommodated within the rising grade class of their current school placement, the following process will be followed to determine school assignment:

1. Students identified under the McKinney-Vento program will receive the first placement of available seats in the rising-grade of their current school placement.
2. Students who received an **early registration** assignment from the 2020 spring early registration period will receive the second placement of available seats in the rising grade based on their placement number assigned through the lottery or early registration assignment date.
3. Students who were assigned to the school based on the 2020-21 amended school assignment policy will receive the third placement of available seats in the first grade based on enrollment date.
4. All students who received school assignment through the three means listed above will be waitlisted according to the rules of each process (enrollment date or lottery number) and will receive assignments as they become available.
5. Students who initially registered for the 2020-21 school year yet unenrolled due to factors relating to the COVID-19 pandemic will be given the next priority for placement after currently enrolled students have received their 2021-22 placement. If placed on a waitlist, students will be waitlisted based on their original placement number assigned through the lottery or early registration date.

In the event a student assigned through the lottery or through the regular assignment process is not able to receive a seat in their currently assigned school, they will be given a new school assignment based on the following process:

1. Family will indicate top three choices for school reassignment.
2. Students will be placed in a school of their choice contingent on space availability within the school.
3. Where space is not immediately available, students being reassigned will receive the top priority and be placed at the top of their requested school's waitlist and receive a waitlist number based on their enrollment date within the district.

Exceptions to the school reassignment process may include the following:

1. New students to the District who have been identified for McKinney-Vento homeless services.
2. Students assigned through an appeals process.

All students who register as new to the District for the 2021-22 school year will be assigned following the process of the 2021-22 school assignment policy.

IV. Out of Zone Placements

Students who were placed at a school outside of their zone of residence due to filled capacity at schools within the zone of their residence will have the opportunity to remain in their placement school, provided that the parent accepts responsibility for transporting the student to and from the school and that the student is not chronically absent or excessively tardy.

In the event an out-of-zone student wishes to be placed in an in-zone school, they will be placed using the same process of students being reassigned within a school in their zone (See Section III):

1. Students identified under the McKinney-Vento program will receive the first placement of available seats in the first grade of their current school placement.
2. Students who received an early registration assignment from the 2020 spring early registration period will receive the second placement of available seats in the ~~first~~ rising grade based on their placement number assigned through the lottery or early registration assignment date.
3. Students who were assigned to the school based on the 2020-21 amended school assignment policy will receive the third placement of available seats in the first grade based on enrollment date.
4. All students who received school assignment through the three means listed above will be waitlisted according to the rules of each process (enrollment date or lottery number) and will receive assignments as they become available.
5. Students who initially registered for the 2020-21 school year yet unenrolled due to factors relating to the COVID-19 pandemic will be given the next priority for placement after currently enrolled students have received their 2021-22 placement. If placed on a waitlist, students will be waitlisted based on their original placement number assigned through the lottery or early registration date.

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